

U. S. Rubber Marks Anniversary Here

One of the Joliet area's industrial giants—the Kankakee Unit of the Joliet Arsenal—this week begins its fifth year of continuous operation by U. S. Rubber Company's Naugatuck Chemical Division.

The sprawling TNT works which was placed in a standby condition after World War II was reactivated on March 1, 1951.

As one of the nation's major explosives manufacturing plants, the Kankakee unit plays a vital role in the country's defense effort in maintaining military preparedness.

The Kankakee unit is one of the government-owned plants directed by the Army's Ordnance Ammunition Command, which has its headquarters here. The mammoth Joliet Arsenal consists of the Kankakee unit and the Elwood unit, a shell-loading plant.

The Kankakee unit is manned by more than 2,000 U. S. Rubber Co. employees, headed by Paul Blunt, plant manager.

During the past four years, the Kankakee unit has achieved a top-notch production record—a record which residents of the Joliet area helped make possible. The majority of employees, including supervision, are long-time residents of Will, Kankakee and Grundy Counties.

During its four years of operation, the Kankakee unit has become an important factor in the local economy. Most of the plant's current monthly payroll of nearly one million dollars flows into Joliet and surrounding communities. Also, many of the goods and services required by the Kankakee unit are provided by local suppliers.

Like many "pure" defense plants, however, the Kankakee unit is subject to sharp fluctuations in terms of production, employment, and payrolls. After reaching its employment and production peak in the fall of 1953, the plant is now at what is considered a fairly stable employment level.

Making trinitrotoluene — this technical name for TNT is a big word seldom heard around the plant—calls for top quality work performance and rigid safety requirements. The employees know their jobs and do them well. They know their efforts are important to themselves, their communities and the entire nation. Recreation, however, is emphasized at the Kankakee unit. Golf courses, gyms, bowling alleys, picnic areas, dance pavilions and similar facilities in and around Joliet are used frequently for U. S. Rubber recreational activities. A high percentage of employee members of plant organizations such as the KNK club, Camera club and sports leagues.

Manager Paul Blunt stresses management's pride in knowing that the Kankakee unit is a partner in the industrial and community life of Joliet and other progressive communities in this area.